

Item: 4

Human Resources Sub-committee: 25 March 2025.

Relocation Policy.

Report by Corporate Director for Neighbourhood Services and Infrastructure.

1. Overview

- 1.1. On 12 December 2017, the Council approved the current Relocation Policy, an update which replaced the previous policy.
- 1.2. It is normal practice that Council Human Resources Policies are reviewed at least every 5 years. This review is therefore overdue; however officers have maintained a close overview of relevant legislation and best practice, and nothing of substance had arisen which would have warranted a formal review prior to this time.
- 1.3. Over time, as with most Human Resources policies, operational processes can and do evolve, which would not necessitate formal policy review. Such evolution of operational process is implemented by officers routinely.
- 1.4. At its meeting held on 21 June 2022, the Policy and Resources Committee recommended that the People Plan 2022-2026 be approved. The People Plan 2022-2026 established strategic priorities which included:
 - Building a talented, confident and resilient workforce with the capabilities to adapt to our changing environment.
 - Establishing a goal of the Council as an employer of choice with a focus on redesign of recruitment approaches as key components of delivering this.
- 1.5. The Council, like many other local and national employers has and is likely to continue over coming years to face increasing challenge in recruiting and retaining a workforce.
- 1.6. Orkney has not for many years had sufficient local population capacity for a range of managerial, specialist, and professional posts, however this challenging recruitment market now extends to many frontline posts as well.
- 1.7. Orkney's level of unemployment is so low, that it is in effect classed as full employment.

- 1.8. The Council's historical perceived advantages of higher salaries and better conditions of service are no longer the case, this differential has and continues to be eroded.
- 1.9. Orkney's geographical location will always be a challenge too far for many potential applicants. Over recent years this is being compounded by a housing crisis of affordable and available housing for people to rent and buy, making recruitment even more challenging.
- 1.10. Since COVID-19 the recruitment marketplace has fundamentally changed, with many organisations having to grasp the remote and home working model, as well as many more employment opportunities are arising for the local population making the available pool of applicants for Council employment even smaller.
- 1.11. The Relocation Policy, attached as Appendix 1, provides discretionary support for applicants having to relocate to Orkney to take up their first employment with the Council or for existing Council employees relocating to or between North Ronaldsay, Westray, Papa Westray, Sanday, Stronsay and Eday to take up a new Council job on the island.
- 1.12. The policies and supporting procedures have been written to ensure compliance with legal requirements and best practice recommendations wherever these can reasonably be accommodated.
- 1.13. His Majesties Revenue and Customs (HMRC) set the governance for what is eligible to be claimed within relocation payments and setting the maximum tax-free limit of £8,000.
- 1.14. HMRC set the following eligibility criteria for payment of relocation:
- 1.15. The individual must change their sole or main residence because of starting a new job, changing the duties of the existing job, or changing the place where the duties are performed. They do not have to dispose of the old property.
- 1.16. The new property must be within reasonable daily travelling distance of the new, normal place of work and the old residence must not be within reasonable daily travelling distance of the new, normal place of work.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. It is recommended that members of the Sub-committee:
 - i. Approve the Relocation Policy, attached as Appendix 1 to this report.

3. Policy Review

- 3.1. As part of the Council People Plan work, a Recruitment Task Force was established, from across the Council workforce and involving Trade Unions to consider the priorities for change and development for recruitment and selection.
- 3.2. The outcomes from this taskforce have formed the basis for the revised Relocation Policy.
- 3.3. The significant revisions to the Relocation Policy are:
 - i. Clarifying in what circumstances relocation payments may be made under HMRC rules.
 - ii. Clarifying in what circumstances relocation payment may not be made under HMRC rules.
 - iii. Returning the maximum amount claim from the current £6,000 to £8,000 the maximum tax-free level allowable by HMRC.
 - iv. Increasing flexibility of what can be claimed by employees, through allowing eligible employees to claim what suits them, within the HMRC set limits and eligible categories.
 - v. Increasing the level of relocation support for an existing Council employee seeking to relocate to or between North Ronaldsay, Westray, Papa Westray, Sanday, Stronsay and Eday to take up employment with the Council on the island from £2,000 to £3,500.
 - vi. Establish a named point of contact for anyone relocating to Orkney to take up employment with the Council to act as a local source of advice, information and support in the relocation process.
 - vii. Establishing support for partners or resident family members of people relocating to Orkney for employment with the Council to find employment, through offering them a 3-month period of guaranteed interview for any Council posts they have the relevant skills, knowledge and experience for.
- 3.4. A more detailed summary of the changes in included at Appendix 2 for ease of reference.

4. Consultation

- 4.1. The revised policies have been consulted and agreed with the recognised Trade Unions.
- 4.2. The new/revised procedures have been consulted with the recognised Trade Unions.

For Further Information please contact:

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Implications of Report

1. Financial

Whilst there are potential increases in costs associated with the revised relocation policy, these relative minor increases will aid in the significant challenge in recruiting to posts that the Council faces. Relocation is a discretionary benefit; each service determines if and when this will be offered and must identify where the costs are being met from within existing budgets; often these are met from within staffing underspend with the post having been vacant for a period of time.

2. Legal

There are no significant legal implications arising directly from the recommendations contained in this report.

3. Corporate Governance

Not applicable.

4. Human Resources

The Human Resource implications are outlined in the body of the report.

5. Equalities

An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken and is attached as Appendix 2 to this report.

6. Island Communities Impact

An Island Communities Impact Assessment is not required as this policy is unlikely to have an effect on an island community which is significantly different from its effect on other communities (including other island communities) within Orkney.

7. Links to Council Plan: The proposals in this report support and contribute to improved outcomes for communities as outlined in the following Council Plan strategic priorities:

- Growing our economy.
- Strengthening our communities.
- Developing our Infrastructure.
- Transforming our Council.

8. Links to Local Outcomes Improvement Plan: The proposals in this report support and contribute to improved outcomes for communities as outlined in the following Local Outcomes Improvement Plan priorities:

- Cost of Living.
- Sustainable Development.
- Local Equality.
- Improving Population Health.

9. Environmental and Climate Risk

Not applicable.

10. Risk

Not applicable.

11. Procurement

Not applicable.

12. Health and Safety

None arising directly from this report.

13. Property and Assets

Not applicable.

14. Information Technology

Not applicable.

15. Cost of Living

Not applicable.

List of Background Papers

None

Appendices

Appendix 1: Relocation Policy.

Appendix 2: Summary of changes to Relocation Policy.

Appendix 3: Equality Impact Assessment.



Appendix 1

Relocation Policy May 2025

For Trade Union Consultation

www.orkney.gov.uk

Document Control Sheet.

Review / approval history.

| Date. | Name. | Position. | Version Approved. |
|---------------|--------------------------------|-----------|-------------------|
| November 2017 | General Meeting of the Council | n/a | 1.0 |
| May 2025 | General Meeting of the Council | n/a | 2.0 |
| | | | |

Change Record Table.

| Date. | Author. | Version. | Status. | Reason. |
|-----------------------------|--------------|----------|---------|--|
| May 2025 | Craig Walker | 2.0 | Draft | Reviewed with Recruitment and Selection Policy |
| Next due for review in 2030 | | | | |

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1. Introduction

Orkney Islands Council has and always will face some additional challenges in relation to recruitment given our geographical location. However, since the COVID-19 pandemic new and unprecedented challenges in the employment and recruitment market in Orkney, including the increase in home and remote working, means that the Council is competing with public and private sector organisations from a much larger geographical area; Brexit has also result in skills shortages in key sectors such as care, early learning, and childcare. These make it even more important than ever that the Council is an employer of choice.

The Council has continues to see many service areas facing recruitment challenges including higher levels of vacancies and a reduction in the number and experience of applicants for posts.

In this context this policy would enable the Council to have the ability to offer attractive financial assistance for people having to relocate to start employment with the Council, targeted for posts that are experiencing difficulties in recruitment.

The Council will align to HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) rules and procedures in relation to relocation expenses.

All £ values quoted in this policy are inclusive of VAT where appropriate.

2. Who does this apply to?

This policy can apply to any post being recruited to, at the discretion of the recruiting service.

Services must be able to identify that posts have trouble in attracting applicants. This could be evidenced in several ways including a number (minimum of 2) of previous unsuccessful attempts to recruit to the post over a reasonable timescale or an evidenced national shortage of a particular skill or type of employee.

3. Eligibility

HMRC rules require that for an individual to be eligible to claim relocation expenses, they must:

Change their sole or main residence because of starting a new job, changing the duties of the existing job, or changing the place where the duties are performed. They do not have to dispose of the old property.

HMRC rules dictate that the new property must be within reasonable daily travelling distance of the new, normal place of work and the old residence must not be within reasonable daily travelling distance of the new, normal place of work.

For the purposes of this policy, to comply with HMRC rules, the Council has determined the following:

3.1. Could qualify for Tax Free relocation of up to £8,000:

- Relocating into Orkney to start first employment with the Council.

3.2. Could qualify for Tax Free relocation of up to £3,500:

- Relocating from the mainland and linked South Isles of Orkney to a North Isle (North Ronaldsay, Westray, Papa Westray, Sanday, Stronsay and Eday) to start a role based on that Island.
- Relocating from a North Isle (North Ronaldsay, Westray, Papa Westray, Sanday, Stronsay and Eday) to another North Isle (North Ronaldsay, Westray, Papa Westray, Sanday, Stronsay and Eday) to start a role based on that Island.

3.3. The following would not qualify for relocation of any type:

- Relocating to the mainland and linked South Isles of Orkney from a North Isle (North Ronaldsay, Westray, Papa Westray, Sanday, Stronsay and Eday – as there is no realistic ability to commute daily) to start a role based on the mainland and linked south isles.
- An individual working remotely, either fully or partly from the mainland of Scotland or other location out of Orkney.

4. Commitment to Remain in Employment

To be eligible for payment of relocation expenses, an employee is committing to work for Orkney Islands Council for a minimum of a three-year period, from the first date of employment in the post for which a relocation payment was claimed.

Should an individual choose to leave employment with the Council before the three-year period is up, they will be required to repay a pro-rata amount of the total relocation expenses claimed.

The calculation of any repayment will be worked out on the following basis:

$$\frac{\text{Number of weeks remaining in minimum 3-year period}}{156 \text{ week (3 years)}} \times \text{£ Relocation Expenses Paid}$$

Any outstanding payment will automatically be deducted from final salary payment. Where this is insufficient to cover the amount owed, the deduction may be spread over more than one salary period, or an invoice will be raised for the outstanding balance for payment within 30 days.

A Corporate Director or Head of Service will have responsibility along with Finance to ensure that any repayment is made.

In exceptional circumstances a Corporate Director or Head of Service can waive the repayment requirement. This waiver can be for some or all the required repayment depending on the individual circumstances. In these circumstances the Corporate Director or Head of Service must advise Finance and Human Resources in writing of their decision not to seek repayment.

The Council will not reclaim relocation expenses where the Council terminates the employment on the grounds of redundancy or early termination of a fixed -term contract. Should the reason for termination relate to reasons of discipline or misconduct, then reclaiming shall be pursued.

5. Time limit for claiming

HMRC rules indicate that relocation expenses must be incurred and claimed before the end of the tax year, following the one in which the employee starts in their new job.

The Tax year runs from 6 April to 5 April annually.

Example 1: A new employee relocating to Orkney commences their job on 15 May 2024.

They have until 5 April 2026 to be able to claim their relocation expenses.

- Employee commences work in Tax Year 6 April 2024 – 5 April 2025.
- The end of the tax year following the tax year in which they commence is 5 April 2026.

Example 2: A new employee relocating to Orkney commenced their job on 15 March 2024.

They have until 5 April 2025 to claim their relocation expenses.

- Employee commences work in Tax Year 6 April 2023 – 5 April 2024.
- The end of the tax year following the tax year in which they commence is 5 April 2025.

6. How much can be claimed?

HMRC rules set the maximum amount of relocation expense that can be paid without liability for Tax and National Insurance at £8,000 including VAT.

7. Temporary Contracted Employees

7.1. Allowance Payable

The Council does not offer relocation expenses for temporary contracts of a duration of less than 1 year, for temporary contract holders in respect of relocation within Orkney Mainland and linked South Isles or for relocation from an outer isle to the mainland or linked south isles.

Temporary contracts of a duration of between 1 year and 3 years+ will be paid a pro-rata amount of the normal, permanent contracted relocation amount. Based on the number of complete weeks of the contract.

Calculation is as follows:

$$\frac{\text{Number of complete weeks of temporary contract}}{156 \text{ (3 years)}} \times \text{Max allowance table 7.1.1/7.1.2}$$

7.1.1. Relocating into Orkney (Mainland and linked South Isles) for Temporary Contract

| Circumstances | Maximum Claim £ | | | Tax & NI Liability |
|----------------------|--------------------|--------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| | 1 yr Temp Contract | 2 yr Temp Contract | 3 yr+ Temp Contract | |
| Relocating to Orkney | £2,667 | £5,333 | £8,000 | No |

7.1.2. Relocating within Orkney from Orkney (Mainland and linked South Isles) to a North Isle (North Ronaldsay, Westray, Papa Westray, Sanday, Stronsay and Eday for a or Temporary Contract

| Circumstances | Maximum Claim £ | | | Tax & NI Liability |
|---|--------------------|--------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| | 1 yr Temp Contract | 2 yr Temp Contract | 3 yr+ Temp Contract | |
| Relocating to a North Isle (North Ronaldsay, Westray, Papa Westray, Sanday, Stronsay and Eday | £666.67 | £1333.33 | £2,000 | No |

7.2. Time limit for Temporary Employment Claims

All relocation expenses claims must be submitted no later than either before the 5 April of the calendar year following the date that started employment in this post, or the end date of your temporary contract whichever is first.

7.3. Extension of Initial Temporary Contract

Where an initial temporary contract was for less than 3 years, and you received a pro-rata entitlement to relocation expenses, and your temporary contract is extended on a continuous service basis, you will be eligible for a further increase in pro-rata entitlement to relocation expenses, until you reach the maximum eligibility of a 3 year temporary contract.

Example: Employee had an initial 1-year temporary contract and received an initial relocation expense entitlement of one-third of the £8,000 i.e. £2,667.

Subsequently the employee received a 1-year extension to their temporary contract, taking the total continuous duration of the initial contract to 2 years.

With this extension of continuous temporary contract, their maximum entitlement to relocation expenses increases to two-thirds of the £8,000, namely £5,333 in total (including the initial £2,667).

7.3.1. Repayment for Temporary Employment Claims

Where a temporary contract holder chooses to leave employment with the Council within the duration of their temporary contract, they will be eligible to repay a pro-rata amount. The pro-rata amount is calculated based on the number of remaining weeks in the contract, divided by the total number of weeks in the temporary contract multiplied by the relocation expenses claimed.

Any outstanding payment will automatically be deducted from final salary payment, where this is insufficient to cover the deduction may be spread over more than one salary period, or an invoice will be raised for the outstanding balance for payment within 30 days.

A Corporate Director or Head of Service have responsibility along with Finance to ensure that any repayment is made.

In exceptional circumstances a Corporate Director or Head of Service can approve that the required repayment is not necessary. This approval can be for some, any, or all the required repayment. In these circumstances the Corporate Director or Head of Service must advise Finance and Human Resources in writing of their decision not to seek repayment.

8. What costs can I claim for?

The Council want to provide relocation employees with as much flexibility as possible in terms of how they choose to use their relocation expenses. However, expenses are only eligible if they satisfy the HMRC rules.

HMRC rules determine that eligible expenses for relocation must fit into one of the following criteria:

- Disposal or intended disposal of old residence.
- Acquisition or intended acquisition of new residence.
- Transporting belongings.
- Travelling and subsistence.
- Domestic goods for the new residence.
- Temporary accommodation.
- Bridging loans.

8.1. Disposal or intended disposal of old residence (Sale).

Examples of types of expenses eligible for claim in this category:

- Legal fees or services connected with the disposal.
- Legal fees or services connected with the redemption of a loan relating to the property. A loan relates to a property if it was raised to acquire the property, or if it was secured on the property.
- Penalties for redeeming a loan relating to the property.
- Estate agent or auctioneer fees for services.
- Advertising.
- Disconnection of electricity, gas, water, or phone services.
- If the property is left empty awaiting disposal:
 - Any rent paid during the period when the property is empty.
 - Insurance for the period.
 - Maintenance of the property during the period.
 - Preserving the security of the property during the period.

Examples of types of expenses not eligible for claim in this category:

- Council Tax.

8.2. Acquisition or intended acquisition of new residence (Purchase).

- Legal expenses and services connected with the acquisition.
- Legal expenses and services connected with any loan raised to acquire (the interest in) the property.
- Procurement or arrangement fees connected with such a loan.
- Mortgage indemnity premiums.
- Survey or inspection of the property.
- Fees payable to the Keeper of the Registers of Scotland.
- Stamp Duty.
- Connection of electricity, gas, water, and phone services.

8.3. Transporting belongings

This covers the physical removal of domestic belongings from the old residence to the new, and the costs of insuring them in transit.

Removal includes:

- Packing and unpacking.
- Temporary storage if a direct move from the old residence to the new is not made.
- Taking down domestic fittings in the old residence if they are to be taken to the new residence and re-attaching them on arrival there.

The Council will pay the lower of two quotes for the removal of household effects to Orkney. If an employee is relocating from another country, they may claim the cost of removing household effects to Orkney. One of the quotes must be from an Orkney based removal company.

Domestic belongings can include household pets.

8.4. Travelling and subsistence

The employee may be eligible for travel and subsistence up to a maximum of two trips for spouse / partner and dependants:

- Preliminary visits to the new location, prior to taking up appointment of the post (Also applies to the employee's immediate family).
- Travelling between the old home and the new work location.
- Travelling between the new home and the old work location (Where the house move takes place before the job transfer).
- Temporary living accommodation. Subsistence is defined for the purposes of removals legislation as meaning 'Temporary living accommodation' (see 8.5).
- Travelling between the old home and the temporary living accommodation.
- Travelling from the old home to the new home when the move takes place (Also applies to the employee's immediate family).

Where a child stays behind at the old location or is sent ahead to the new location to ensure continuity of education, relief may be available for the child's cost of travel and subsistence.

8.5. Temporary Accommodation

Temporary accommodation applies where the employee intends to move to permanent accommodation to complete the relocation. So, for an employee who lives in a hotel until the old home is sold and a new home purchased, or who moves into a rented house at the new location for the same reason, the hotel and rented property represent temporary living accommodation.

Orkney Islands Council does not provide council housing as part of the relocation package. Relocating workers will be considered for council housing under the terms of the Council's Allocation Policy, in line with all other housing applicants.

Ability to claim payment of the temporary accommodation will stop should any of the following circumstances occur:

- The employee takes possession of a property they have bought in Orkney.
- The employee takes up a Scottish Secure Tenancy from Orkney Islands Council or Orkney Housing Association Limited.
- The total cost of the relocation package exceeds the maximum entitlement as stated in the relocation agreement (inclusive of VAT).
- Expiry of the period defined by HRMC for relocation expenses to be claimed with (see section 5).

8.6. Specific Island Communities.

Priority will be given to a Head Teacher to access a schoolhouse as relevant. The Council's Lettings Policy gives some priority to those requiring living in specific communities because of, for example, work commitments. Allocation of property thereafter is dependent on availability and level of demand.

8.7. Domestic goods for the new residence

Costs for the purchase of essential domestic goods for the new residence, are potentially eligible for claim where the purchase of domestic goods is to replace items used at the old home that are not suitable for use in the new home. This does not include replacement of goods for aesthetic purposes, nor does it cover goods deemed as non-essential/luxury i.e. installation of Sky or broadband.

9. International Relocation

Where an individual is relocating to start work with the Council from out with the UK, there is no different value of maximum relocation package available to them.

Costs associated with obtaining Visas for the employee and or their family members are not eligible for claiming via relocation expenses. All other provisions of this policy apply equally.

10. Approval and Payment

Employees will not be eligible to reclaim expenses until the agreement for the repayment of relocation expenses has been signed.

All costs are directly paid by the employee and are then reimbursed following completion of the appropriate claim form(s) (Appendix 1). The exception is removal costs, which can be

paid directly by the Council. Only expenditure that is actually and necessarily incurred will be reimbursed.

It is the employee's responsibility to ensure that their expenditure claim is in line with the Relocation Policy rules, in advance of making a financial commitment to relocation expenditure.

Claims in respect of these allowances will normally be submitted via the Council Expenses process on Integra. Only where an employee has no ability to be able to access Integra shall manual claims be accepted, which must be approved by the Head of Service.

All claims must be supported by appropriate statements / receipts.

The Corporate Director or Head of Service will ensure all claims are legitimate before approval of payment is granted.

The Service will administer all payments, ensuring costs are claimed within the timescale and that the total cost of each relocation package does not exceed the maximum limit inclusive of VAT.

The Payments Section, Finance will process these payments following confirmation from the Service, and receipt of appropriately authorised documentation and receipts.

The employee will determine the make-up of the relocation package; however, **the total cost must not exceed the maximum claim as indicated in the relocation agreement** and must comply with qualifying categories set out in section 8 of this policy.

The examples of eligible items for claims given in this policy are neither an exhaustive nor definitive list of eligible and non-eligible claims. The Corporate Director, Head of Service and Head of Finance, or their nominated deputy, have the right to reject any aspect of a claim where these do not comply with this policy and HMRC rules for eligible claims of relocation expenses.

11. Other Relocation Support

11.1. Relocation Support Contact

The Council will allocate a named point of contact for any new employee relocating to Orkney to start employment. They will function as relocation support to provide any advice, guidance, and support in respect of any matter relating to relocation.

11.2. Support for Relocating Family Members

The Council acknowledges that when an individual relocates to Orkney for work, they are often joined by a partner or other family members who live with them, who may also be seeking employment.

The Council is committed to look to offer support and assistance for partners and resident family members to be able to find employment, from the point at which the formal offer of employment is accepted for a period of up to 3 months.

The Council will provide the following support and assistance to partners/resident family members of individual relocating to Orkney to start employment with the Council:

- Enable partners/resident family members to be able to apply for any Council vacancy, including internal advertised roles.
- Offer a guaranteed interview for partners/resident family members where they meet the essential criteria for a Council post.
- Signpost partners/resident family members to other possible employers within Orkney.

12. Supporting Documents

Supporting documentation for this policy:

- Relocation Offer Letter and Agreement (Permanent Contracts)
- Relocation Offer Letter and Agreement (Temporary Contracts)
- Relocation Offer Letter and Agreement (Temporary Contract Extension)
- Relocation Expenses Claim Form (Appendix 1)

These are available on MyView/Useful HR Information or from HR Support.

Revised HR Policy Review 2025 – Significant Changes Summary

Relocation Policy

| Relocation Assistance | |
|--|--|
| Current Policy | Revised Policy |
| <p>Up to £6,000 where you are relocating into Orkney (mainland) to start employment.</p> <p>Additional £2,000 where you are relocating to an inner/outer isle to start employment on the island.</p> <p>£200 where you are relocating to or from an inner or outer isle for purposes of taking up other employment with the Council.</p> <p>Various limits on amounts that can be claimed i.e. £1,000 for removal costs.</p> | <p>Clarifying what would and would not be eligible for relocation expenses to be payable, to be compliant with HMRC rules:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relocating into Orkney to start first employment with the Council. • Relocating from mainland of Orkney and linked South Isles to a North Isle to start a new role based on the North Isle. <p>Would <u>not qualify</u> for relocation of any type:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relocating from a North Isle (North Ronaldsay, Westray, Papa Westray, Sanday, Stronsay and Eday) to the mainland of Orkney or linked South Isles to start a new role based on the mainland or linked South Isles. • An individual working remotely, either fully or partially from the mainland of Scotland or other location out of Orkney. <p>Return to Maximum tax-free amount of £8,000.</p> <p>Ability to offer anyone relocating from Orkney mainland or Linked South Isles to a North Isle (North Ronaldsay, Westray, Papa Westray, Sanday, Stronsay and Eday) or between North Isles (North Ronaldsay, Westray, Papa Westray, Sanday, Stronsay and Eday) for a role on the North Isle a relocation amount of up to £3,500 (non-taxable). (Would exclude Isles that can reasonably be commuted to from Mainland e.g. Hoy, Shapinsay, Rousay etc.)</p> <p>Simplify and increase flexibility of applicants to claim, stick to the 5 broad categories as stated by HMRC without any further artificial limits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • disposal or intended disposal of old residence. • acquisition or intended acquisition of new residence. |

- transporting belongings.
- travelling and subsistence.
- domestic goods for the new residence.
- bridging loans.

Other Relocation Support

Relocation Support Contact

The Council will allocate a named point of contact for any new employee relocating to Orkney to start employment. They will function as relocation support to provide any advice, guidance, and support in respect of any matter relating to relocation.

Support for Relocating Family Members

The Council acknowledges that when an individual relocates to Orkney for work, they are often joined by a partner or other family members that live with them, who may also be seeking employment.

The Council is committed to look to offer support and assistance for partners, resident family members to be able to find employment, from the point at which the formal offer of employment is accepted for a period of up to 3 months.

The Council will provide the following support and assistance to partners/resident family members of individual relocating to Orkney to start employment with the Council:

- Enable partners/resident family members to be able to apply for any Council vacancy, including internal advertised roles.
- Offer a guaranteed interview for partners/resident family members where they meet the essential criteria for a Council post.
- Signpost partners/resident family members to other possible employers within Orkney.



Equality Impact Assessment

The purpose of an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) is to improve the work of Orkney Islands Council by making sure it promotes equality and does not discriminate. This assessment records the likely impact of any changes to a function, policy or plan by anticipating the consequences, and making sure that any negative impacts are eliminated or minimised and positive impacts are maximised.

| 1. Identification of Function, Policy or Plan | |
|--|--|
| Name of function / policy / plan to be assessed. | Relocation Policy |
| Service / service area responsible. | Strategy, Performance and Business Solutions |
| Name of person carrying out the assessment and contact details. | Craig A Walker Service Manger (HR Operations) craig.walker@orkney.gov.uk 01856 873535 ext. 2263 |
| Date of assessment. | 26 February 2025 |
| Is the function / policy / plan new or existing? (Please indicate also if the service is to be deleted, reduced or changed significantly). | Relocation Policy – existing policy, updated |

| 2. Initial Screening | |
|---|---|
| What are the intended outcomes of the function / policy / plan? | To ensure that the Council can attract and retain a workforce with the relevant skills, knowledge and experience in a legal and equitable manner. |
| Is the function / policy / plan strategically important? | These policies contribute to the Council People Plan strategic priority of building a talented, confident and resilient workforce with the capabilities to adapt to out changing environment. There are also links to the Council <u>Equality Outcomes</u> specifically in relation to attracting more diverse talent and reducing our gender pay gap. |

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>State who is, or may be affected by this function / policy / plan, and how.</p> | <p>Any possible applicant for employment with the Council. All Council employees.</p> |
| <p>How have stakeholders been involved in the development of this function / policy / plan?</p> | <p>Recruitment Taskforce of cross Council employees and Trade Union Reps reviewed current approaches and priorities for recruitment and selection at the start of the review to set key priorities. Policies have been reviewed and agreed by the Corporate Leadership Team. Policies are subject to collective bargaining with the Council recognised Trade Unions before final approval from Elected Members.</p> |
| <p>Is there any existing data and / or research relating to equalities issues in this policy area? Please summarise. E.g. consultations, national surveys, performance data, complaints, service user feedback, academic / consultants' reports, benchmarking (see equalities resources on OIC information portal).</p> | <p><u>The Equality and Human Rights Monitor: Is Scotland Fairer report published in November 2023</u> by the Equality and Human Rights Commission reviews the available data and evidence to support evidence-based debate and decisions to drive action and meaningful change that will make life fairer for everyone in Scotland. The report focuses on six major areas of life for each protected characteristic; one of which includes work. Key findings include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The attainment gap between looked after children has not reduced resulting in lower further or higher education, employment or training outcomes. • Despite increasing levels of employment, disabled people in Scotland are more likely to earn a lower hourly wage and / or be in low-paid employment than non-disabled people, with the gap widening. • Despite increasing employment levels, ethnic minority workers in Scotland on average experience both a lower quantity and poorer quality of work, with consistently lower median hourly earnings and higher levels of insecure work. • The employment and gender pay gap in Scotland has narrowed. However, the Scottish labour market continues to have high levels of sex segregation and strong sex segregation in apprenticeships reflecting the labour market. <p>The Scottish Government published <u>A Fairer Scotland for All: An Anti-Racist Employment Strategy</u> focusing on four areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding the workforce through data. |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acting on recruitment and representation. • Driving cultural and attitudinal change. • Fair work policy and legislation. <p>The strategy provides guidance for employers to create inclusive workplaces by developing an anti-racist culture; raising awareness of the harms of racism, including hate-crime and supporting anti-racist campaigns.</p> <p>The <u>Disability Confident employer scheme</u> is a government initiative that encourages people to increase the number of disabled people they hire. The framework sets out three levels of achievement to support organisations put steps in place to help the recruitment, retention and development of disabled people.</p> |
| <p>Is there any existing evidence relating to socio-economic disadvantage and inequalities of outcome in this policy area? Please summarise.</p> <p>E.g. For people living in poverty or for people of low income. See <u>The Fairer Scotland Duty Guidance for Public Bodies</u> for further information.</p> | <p>The Scottish Government's <u>Fair Work First</u> programme is designed to support employers to embed fairer working practices including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The adoption of the real Living Wage. • To take action to tackle the gender pay gaps. • To take action to create a more diverse and inclusive workplace. • To offer flexible and family friendly working practices from day one of employment. |
| <p>Could the function / policy have a differential impact on any of the following equality areas?</p> | <p>Policies are written to ensure compliance with all relevant equalities legislation and to aim to provide equal treatment for all, as far as is reasonably possible.</p> |
| <p>1. Race: this includes ethnic or national groups, colour and nationality.</p> | <p>We continue to monitor recruitment and retention of colleagues based on ethnicity along with reporting on any pay gaps in this area. We aim for our recruitment processes to reflect the diversity of our communities.</p> |
| <p>2. Sex: a man or a woman.</p> | <p>We recognise that Orkney Islands Council has a gender pay gap and issues relating to occupational segregation in some areas. We have a commitment to reducing the gender pay gap within our Equality Outcomes and a specific action plan to help to address this. An inclusive recruitment policy supports this work.</p> |
| <p>3. Sexual Orientation: whether a person's sexual attraction is towards their own sex, the opposite sex or to both sexes.</p> | <p>N/A</p> |

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| 4. Gender Reassignment: the process of transitioning from one gender to another. | Disclosure Scotland produce specific guidance and a dedicated process in relation to trans gender and non-binary applicants to apply for criminal convictions checks. https://www.mygov.scot/transgender-disclosure-application |
| 5. Pregnancy and maternity. | N/A |
| 6. Age: people of different ages. | Aging population and workforce and priority to attract younger people in People Plan. Armed Forces covenant? One of the key aims of the Recruitment and Selection policy is to 'provide developmental opportunities for local, young people to seek employment and develop long-term career opportunities'. |
| 7. Religion or beliefs or none (atheists). | N/A |
| 8. Caring responsibilities. | The improved / supportive approach to flexible working options within the recruitment and selection framework will likely have a positive impact on those with caring responsibilities. |
| 9. Care experienced. | The policy outlines our commitment to offering an interview to applicants who are care experienced with the aim of having a positive impact for this group. |
| 10. Marriage and Civil Partnerships. | N/A |
| 11. Disability: people with disabilities (whether registered or not). | Disability pay gap, Disability confident Reasonable adjustment guide? One of the key aims of the Recruitment and Selection policy is to 'ensure that those who may face challenge or disadvantage in gaining employment, including where this is as a result of having a disability, are not unfairly excluded from gaining employment'. This aligns to our commitment as a Disability Confident Employer as part of the Disability Confident accreditation framework. An alternative format approach to the application process is offered as a reasonable adjustment to disabled candidates as well as support for those who may require assistance in submitting an online application. The policy also outlines our commitment to offering an interview to applicants with a disability. |

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| | There is a commitment to providing feedback to all candidates who are part of the guaranteed interview process. |
| 12. Socio-economic disadvantage. | It might be worth including reference to the real living wage and Fair work first commitment and recruitment incentives to support those who experience socio-economic disadvantage? |

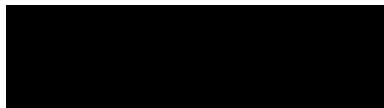
3. Impact Assessment

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| Does the analysis above identify any differential impacts which need to be addressed? | No |
| How could you minimise or remove any potential negative impacts? | Policies are written to ensure compliance with all relevant equalities legislation and to aim to provide equal treatment for all, as far as is reasonably possible. |
| Do you have enough information to make a judgement? If no, what information do you require? | Yes |

4. Conclusions and Planned Action

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| Is further work required? | No. |
| What action is to be taken? | N/A It would probably be useful to reference here any monitoring / statistics based on protected characteristics? |
| Who will undertake it? | N/A |
| When will it be done? | N/A |
| How will it be monitored? (e.g. through service plans). | N/A |

Signature:



Date: 7 March 2025

Name: CRAIG A WALKER

(BLOCK CAPITALS).

Please sign and date this form, keep one copy and send a copy to HR and Performance. A Word version should also be emailed to Human Resources and Organisational Development at hrrsupport@orkney.gov.uk.